

CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

1. (Currently Amended) A data structure for an electronic mail file comprising:
a first portion comprising a single file including combined electronic mail data and variable meta-data information describing the electronic mail data; and
a second portion comprising a header with links to information capable of ~~monitoring~~ recording changes in the variable meta-data information, the information additionally capable of identifying a location of the electronic mail data within the electronic mail file.
2. (Original) The data structure of claim 1, wherein the header includes a link to a start of the electronic mail data.
3. (Original) The data structure of claim 1, wherein the header includes a link to an electronic mail sender.
4. (Original) The data structure of claim 1, wherein the header includes a link to an electronic mail recipient.
5. (Original) The data structure of claim 1, wherein the header operates as an encoder and monitors changes to the variable meta-data information.
6. (Original) The data structure of claim 1, wherein the header operates as an encoder and monitors a location of the electronic mail data within the file.
7. (Original) The data structure of claim 1, wherein the meta-data information is referenced in the header.
8. (Currently Amended) A method of encoding electronic mail comprising:

combining into a single electronic mail file electronic mail data and variable meta-data information describing the electronic mail data; ~~monitoring~~ recording changes to the meta-data information with a header; and monitoring a location of the electronic mail data within the electronic mail file with the header.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the electronic mail data is of variable length when unrecorded and is of fixed length when recorded.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the meta-data information is referenced in the header.

11. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the header operates as an encoder.

12. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the header contains links to a start of the electronic mail data, to an electronic mail sender, and to an electronic mail recipient.

13. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium having computer readable instructions encoded therein to:
accept an electronic mail connection;
receive a single electronic mail file comprising electronic mail data combined with meta-data information describing the electronic mail data, the single electronic mail file further comprising a header with links to the meta-data information and a location of the electronic mail data;
record the electronic mail data;
compute and record the meta-data information;
compute and record links within the header; and

pass the electronic mail file containing the electronic mail data and the meta-data information for processing.

14. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 13, wherein the electronic mail data is of variable length when unrecorded and is of fixed length when recorded.
15. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 13, wherein the meta-data information is referenced in the header.
16. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 13, wherein the header links include links to a start of the electronic mail data, to an electronic mail sender, and to an electronic mail recipient.
17. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 13, wherein the header is used to monitor changes to the meta-data information.
18. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 13, wherein the header is used to monitor a location of the electronic mail data within the file.
19. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium having computer readable instructions encoded therein to:
 - open a single electronic mail file containing combined electronic mail data and meta-data information describing the electronic mail data, the single electronic mail file further comprising a header with links to the meta-data information and a location of the electronic mail data;
 - recompute the meta-data information;
 - attempt delivery of the electronic mail file;
 - rewrite the meta-data information;
 - change the links contained within the header; and
 - close the electronic mail file.

20. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 19, wherein the electronic mail data is of variable length when unrecorded and is of fixed length once recorded.
21. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 19, wherein the meta-data information is referenced in the header.
22. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 19, wherein the header includes links to a start of the electronic mail data, to an electronic mail sender, and to an electronic mail recipient.
23. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 19, wherein the header operates as an encoder.
24. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 23, wherein the header monitors changes to the meta-data information.
25. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 23, wherein the header monitors a location of the electronic mail data within the file.
26. (Currently Amended) A method of providing a single electronic mail file from a sending computer to at least one receiving computer within a data communication network comprising:
- establishing a simple mail transfer protocol (SMTP) session between the sending computer and the at least one receiving computer;
 - generating commands by the sending computer;
 - sending the commands to the at least one receiving computer; and
 - sending replies from the at least one receiving computer to the sending computers

wherein the single electronic mail file includes combined electronic mail data and variable meta-data information describing the electronic mail data and a header containing links to the meta-data information and to a location of the electronic mail data within the electronic mail file.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein the data communication network includes an Internet or Intranet.
28. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein the header includes a link to a start of the electronic mail data, to an electronic mail sender, and to an electronic mail recipient.
29. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein the header monitors changes to the meta-data information and monitors a location of the electronic mail data within the file.
30. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein the meta-data information is referenced in the header.